



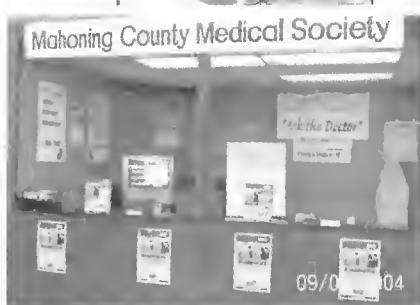
Bulletin

of the Mahoning County Medical Society
September - October 2004

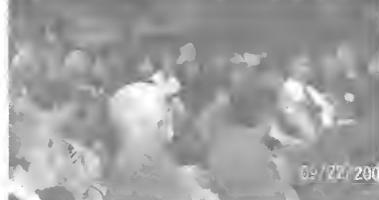
WHERE DOES IT HURT?

Trivolous lawsuits are hurting health care right here at home.

CANTFIELD FAIR



TOWN HALL MEETING 9/22/04



Bulletin

Editor Thomas S. Boniface, MD

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CALENDAR

November 2, 2004 *ELECTION DAY*

November 17, 2004 *Council Meeting*

November 24, 2004 *Distinguished Physician Nominations Deadline*

December 15, 2004 *Council Meeting*

January 25, 2005 *Annual Meeting, Holiday Inn Boardman*

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or
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From the President

by Marc S. Saunders, DO

I hope everyone had a nice summer. Now that it's close to election time, We have some unfinished business to attend to (sorry about dangling my participle there). We now have to get down in the trenches and do some important work. Our most important activity now is to get our candidates elected in the Ohio State Supreme Court election. This is the single most important election in Ohio for us and our patients. We want to elect candidates who are constitutionalists (those who will seek to support legislation that is already law in Ohio, recognizing that the lawmakers have tried already to make it constitutional), not revisionists (who will seek to change the laws based on their own beliefs). The key piece of legislation that will be brought to the Supreme Court in this next term is the Tort Reform law passed a couple of years ago. Until it is deemed constitutional, it will not have an effect on our premiums.

So now some of you are asking, "For whom do we cast our vote?" (Note the better positioning of the preposition). If you have not yet been to the "Where Does It Hurt?" website (www.wheredoesithurt.org), which has links to other websites to point you in the right direction, here are the names:

Chief Justice Thomas Moyer
Justice Terrence O'Donnell
Judge Judith Lanzinger

If you forget the names, remember the mnemonic "MODEL". Get it? M for Moyer, ODE for O'Donnell, and L for Lanzinger. Simple, right? It's not enough to know for whom you should vote, but you need to spread the word to your patients as well. As voting physicians, we have a limited number of votes that we can cast ourselves. However, if one adds his patients, our cause has an unlimited number of votes. Here's what I do. I went to the www.ohiopfc.com website and ordered (free of charge) a supply of "Prescription For A Fair Court" pads (pads that have Moyer, O'Donnell, and Lanzinger's names on them). For each patient I see, I ask them to do me and themselves a favor. I hand them the sheet of paper from the pad and tell them that they can help to save their own healthcare by casting votes for these three candidates. I give them the same "MODEL" mnemonic to remember, and tell them to be careful, because O'Donnell is being opposed by O'Neill. So far, nobody in months has balked or refused to help.

By the way, the Ohio State Bar Association has rated our "MODEL" candidates as "Highly Recommended", whereas their opponents are either rated as "Recommended" or "Acceptable". How's that for a seal of approval.

I've been asked by several members of the OSMA staff to continue the Where Does It Hurt? campaign after the November elections so that our area can help get some more legislation passed next year. In order to do this, we'll need to do some more fund raising, but I think it's definitely worthwhile, and I hope you do too.

As an aside, I was talking to a physician recently who was in the Mahoning County Courthouse a couple of weeks ago. He was talking to an attorney and a magistrate who told him that our WDIH ad campaign has had more effect than we had imagined. Although it is primarily aimed now at the supreme court election, the magistrate told this physician that the malpractice juries have become far more conservative in their judgements. In fact, this physician told me that he was told the last eight judgments went for defendant physicians with no awards. This is great news! It means that all the talking and advertising and community relations have started to change the mindset of the residents of this area.

So, in closing for now, I want to remind my colleagues that our future and healthcare availability in this area is up to us. Even if it takes a little extra time and commitment, get down in the trenches and help win this election. We've told our patients to talk to us about who they should support. It's now up to us to follow through. If you need handouts with the candidates' names on them, call Karyn at the Medical Society office (330-758-1624). She also has lawn signs available. If you don't have the time, it's just as easy to write the names down on a piece of paper or a business card and hand it to your patient. It's quick, easy, and effective.

Please help do your part. Thanks for your help in advance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc S. Saunders, DO, FACS". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Marc S." at the top, "Saunders" in the middle, "DO" above "FACS", and "FACS" at the bottom right.



ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

Alas, poor Vioxx, I knew him well.

Sometimes it's frightening how well one can predict the future. Some years ago, when this drug was introduced, and I had the opportunity to test it out, both personally (being injury prone) and professionally, I remember making the frequent observation that it worked so well it was scary. I recalled quite clearly the experiences with Zomax, over 10 years earlier, which was even greater in its prodigious and wonderful powers of pain relief and suppression of inflammation. We gave it to everyone, it was studied as a possible remittive agent in autoimmune arthritis, and it seemed a miracle for most all who tried it. Like most things deemed too good to be true, it was. Mortal anaphylactic reactions and morbid acute renal failures did it in after a few short years. We missed its efficacy, but others were to follow. Toradol, for instance, came from the same chemical class, and it, too, was a wonder, for a while. Similar problems predictably followed, and it has been limited to duration of use too short to be of much help for most situations. Vioxx seemed to fill this void well enough to be, well, scary. But use it we did – so much so that it became about the biggest drug out there, and it even spawned others like it, but none ever quite caught up to it. "Vitamin V" or "Flavor of the Day" we called it, handing it out by the bagfuls. Unfortunately it ended up more the latter than the former. Helped an awful lot of people in the process, too, I might add – both patients and stockholders alike, I'd venture.

In light of the apparently convincing evidence of the long term risks, it is fortunate that most of this usage was short term, or even PRN, since after all, all drugs are poison, as I like to remind people. Nothing we do, or don't do for that matter, is without risk. Apparently the risk with Vioxx, if taken continuously for 18 months or more, is a doubling of one's risk for heart attack or stroke – this risk, ironically enough, was discovered during a study of whether Vioxx might actually help *prevent* disease. Without minimizing this risk, I'd like to point out that living in pain is no bonus, nor is having surgery, nor is taking narcotics 2, 3, or 4 times a day, and neither is having a GI bleed. We have all seen enough to know that this drug without question played a role in helping patients in all these ways. Also it won't help to mention that doubling the incidence of a rare event still leaves one with a rare event ($2 \times .002 = .004$). Little consolation to those who by now I'm sure are plaintiffs in the inevitable lawsuits, which I'm sure are well underway by the time you read this. In fact, Merck withdrew the drug precipitously via the press, rather than by physician advisory, even before the study in question had been published, undoubtedly after consultation with their legal department. The law has replaced science and reason as primary concern.

In any event, Vioxx is gone, and we can only hope that its maker will not be itself undone by the ravages of the legal system that will come, as was Dow Corning after the breast implant fiasco, decided by human sympathies in the lay media instead of by rational science directed toward the greater good. Are SSRI's next? Time will tell, but as we've known for a long time, there's no such thing as a free lunch, and one should always resist the temptation of the easy fix. "Isn't there just a pill I can take, Doctor?" "Maybe, maybe not. Perhaps you should talk to your lawyer."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T S Boniface MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "T S" at the top, "Boniface" in the middle, and "MD" at the end.

Bits 'n' Pieces

2005 DUES BILLING SENT IN SEPTEMBER

Membership dues billing for 2005 has been mailed to all current members. Thanks to those members who have already submitted payment. Remember that dues are payable by December 31, 2004.

CHANGES TO DIRECTORY

Please make the following changes to your 2004 Membership Directory:

Escarlito Sevilla, MD - add Head & neck surgery, add to specialty listing.

We apologize for this omission.

Patrick Stocker, MD - Left area

Karl Wieneke, MD - disability for 2004

Charles Sammarone, DO - dropped membership

Change of phone number:

Dr. Roberto Bacani and Dr. Daniel Barton

Phone: 330-759-1675 or 330-884-3122

Reinstated:

Robert Sinsheimer, MD

David Rich, MD

Joseph P. Ambrose, DO

SUPREME COURT RACES

Remember the names: *Moyer, O'Donnell & Lanzinger*. These are the candidates endorsed by OMPAC for the Ohio Supreme Court races in November's election. All OSMA members received information on these candidates to hand out to patients. If you need more, contact the Society office. A few yard signs are also available.

ACCU-MEDICAL WASTE SYSTEMS, INC.

Just a reminder that Accu-Medical Waste Systems offers Mahoning County Medical Society members great prices on medical waste pickup. You pay only \$32 per 30-gallon container picked up. No maintenance fees or monthly fees. You may schedule regular pickups or on-call pickups. This price is guaranteed for two more years. Call 1-866-696-8373 toll free for more information or to sign up.



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Stephen N. Crowe, MD

Sleep Medicine

721 Boardman-Poland Road
Suite 204
Youngstown, OH 44512

Medical Education: Medical College of Georgia
Internship: Columbus Regional Medical Center, Columbus, GA
Residency: Columbus Regional Medical Center, Columbus, GA
Fellowship: University of Mississippi Medical Center

LeRoy R. Eberly, MD

Pediatrics

6505 Market Street
Bldg. C, Suite 212
Youngstown, OH 44512

Medical Education: Medical College of Ohio/Toledo
Internship: Forum Health, Youngstown
Residency: Tod Children's Hospital, Youngstown

Michael T. Engle, MD

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

PM&R North
822 E. Western Reserve Rd.
Poland, OH 44514

Medical Education: Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine
Internship: Mount Carmel Medical Center, Columbus, OH
Residency: Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Eric T. Gross, MD

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

6674 Tippecanoe Road
Suite 1
Canfield, OH 44406

Medical Education: Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine
Internship: MetroHealth Medical Center, Cleveland, OH
Residency: MetroHealth Medical Center, Cleveland, OH

Babitha Nalluri, MD

OB/GYN

815 Southwestern Run
Poland, OH 44514

Medical Education: Sri Siddhartha Medical, India
Internship: St. Elizabeth Health Center, Youngstown
Residency: St. Elizabeth Health Center, Youngstown

Craig A. Wagley, MD

Oral/Maxillofacial Surgery

5437 Mahoning Ave.
Youngstown, OH 44515

Medical Education: Case Western Reserve University
Internship: MetroHealth Medical Center, Cleveland, OH
Residency: University Hospital, Cleveland, OH

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ELECTION DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PHYSICIANS

Many of our members question what they may and may not do to support candidates in an election. The OSMA recently provided the following information regarding permitted activities for individual physicians in the election process. This information has been edited for space, but the entire document, including permitted activities for limited liability corporations and partnerships, may be found on the OSMA website, www.osma.org.

OHIO SUPREME COURT CAMPAIGN & ELECTION EFFORTS

Permitted Activities

Individual Physicians may...

- Contribute up to \$2,500 per election to a Supreme Court candidate campaign committee
- Contribute up to \$17,000 per year to a state political party judicial candidate fund
- Contribute up to \$5,000 per year to a political action committee (PAC)
- Contribute to an issue campaign
- Host a fundraiser for a Supreme Court candidate
- Communicate verbal messages to friends and family supporting/opposing a judicial candidate
- Communicate verbal messages to medical colleagues supporting/opposing a judicial candidate.
- Produce and/or distribute educational materials to friends and family supporting/opposing an issue
- Produce and/or distribute educational materials to medical staff/employees supporting/opposing an issue
- Produce and/or distribute educational materials to patients/the public on an issue
- Produce and/or distribute materials supporting/opposing a judicial candidate
- Participate in non-partisan voter registration drives
- Produce and/distribute prescription drug pads that include a message supporting/opposing an issue
- Produce and/or distribute prescription drug pads that includes a message supporting/opposing a judicial candidate
- Submit letters to editors/editorials supporting/opposing an issue
- Submit letters to editors/editorials supporting/opposing a candidate

Ask your doctors who they'll vote for this November.



HAVE YOU SEEN THIS BILLBOARD?

Billboards are a part of Phase III of the "Where Does It Hurt?" public awareness campaign, along with the Physicians Awareness Day Town Hall meeting held on September 22, 2004, at the Kilcawley Center at Youngstown State University and a new TV commercial telling the public to ask their doctors who to vote for in the Ohio Supreme Court elections in November. There is a variety of information available from OMPAC and from Ohio Patients for a Fair Court (www.ohiopfc.com) to inform your patients, friends and family on the importance of electing justices to the Supreme Court who support medicine. A limited supply of this information is also available from your county society. Remember to get out and vote on November 2nd.

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